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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 003037

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SUBJECT: AMB WOOD DISCUSSES EU,S WORK IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: BRUSSELS 2595

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Laurence Wohlers for reason
s 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan William Wood met with EU Council Secretariat and Commission officials September 17 and 18 in Brussels to discuss U.S. and EU efforts in Afghanistan. Topics included the EUPOL police training mission, European Commission assistance programs, and counternarcotics. Wood stressed the importance of the EU,s efforts in all of these areas and encouraged EU interlocutors to identify more areas where the EU could help. He noted that many other countries would be encouraged to step up to the plate in Afghanistan if they saw that the EU was there. End Summary.

EUPOL

¶2. (C) Director General for External Political and Military Affairs Robert Cooper and (separately) Deputy Director General for ESDP Pieter Feith told Ambassador Wood they would soon make public the name of the person replacing EU Police Training Mission (EUPOL) commander Friedrich Eichele, Jurgen Scholz. They described Scholz as experienced and competent but with a tough personality and noted he would need to control his temper. They stressed that they planned to spend some time with Scholz before he went out to the field to make sure he got started on the right foot and that they would keep him on a short leash, insisting that he stick to the mission, develop it, and move it into operational duty. Both interlocutors asked that the USG maintain close contact with Scholz once he assumed his new position, to ensure he was well versed in USG policy and priorities. Wood assured them that we would do so.

¶3. (C) Wood said that the USG is enthusiastic about police reform, but noted the USG and the EU had slightly different, but &complementary8 visions. Wood stressed that the short term training and deployment of police was as important as the long term development of the police and said it was necessary to allocate resources appropriately to achieve the right balance. He cautioned against training police to operate in a judicial system that was not yet developed and stressed instead the importance of having police who could serve as mediators between traditional and modern justice systems.

¶4. (C) Feith said he agreed with Wood on the importance of both the short term and long term needs, but that what Wood proposed would entail a change of mission statement and track for EUPOL. He said his first priority was to salvage the EUPOL force and get it back on track, stressing that it would

be extremely difficult at this point to ask Member States to recalibrate EUPOL's mission statement. He asked that the USG first bear with him while he worked to get EUPOL back up and running, with a commander who understood all of these concerns and could discuss them with the USG. Once that was in place, the EU could consider adjusting EUPOL's mandate as well as increasing its size. Wood assured Feith that we support EUPOL completely and want to make it a success.

15. (C) Turning to the EU's request for USG support for EUPOL (reftel), Feith asked Wood whether there was a way to find a practical work-around solution that would allow EUPOL to get the support it needed. Wood replied that the USG was trying hard to find a solution, that we know that it is critical and urgent, and that we want to make it work.

Commission Assistance Programs

16. (C) Several European Commission (EC) officials handling assistance for Afghanistan briefed Amb. Wood on their programs. RELEX Head of Unit for Afghanistan and Pakistan Helen Campbell said the EC was on track with funding, having implemented the one billion euro Tokyo pledge and shielding Afghanistan somewhat from the overall cuts in the EC's external relations budget. She also noted the EC had set aside euros 10.6 million euros to fund Member States, Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) activities, but that Member States were slow to apply for the funding. Wood suggested designating someone at the EC delegation in Kabul to assist new Member States unfamiliar with programming for development assistance seek out and apply for this kind of funding. Campbell noted that with the new EC team in Kabul it could be possible to have one of the staff members perform

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this role.

Counternarcotics

17. (C) Ambassador Wood also met with a group of Commission and Council Secretariat Officials involved in coordinating EU drug policies, including Council Secretariat Head of Unit for Drugs Coordination Johannes Vos, Commission Head of Unit for Drugs Coordination Carel Edwards, and Commission Afghanistan Desk Officer Paul Turner. Ambassador Wood noted that the United States will have spent over 2.2 billion U.S. dollars by the end of 2007, including at least 400 million dollars in Helmand Province alone. He lamented that drug production had tripled during this same period. According to the empirical evidence, what we have been doing doesn't work.⁸ While some provinces had become free of drug cultivation, all remained active in various aspects of the drug trade, including processing and smuggling. According to UN figures, 90 percent of opium may be transformed into heroin before departing Afghanistan.

18. (C) Edwards said he did not fully accept the figures used in the report by United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC). He believed that most of the heroin remained in the region, particularly Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, for local consumption. Heroin abuse had not become a greater problem in Europe, where consumption remained level or declined. The Commission and Member States were also expending huge sums in Afghanistan. Turner noted the Commission had spent one billion Euros thus far, with a major component devoted to promoting alternative livelihoods. All agreed that production had increased, even if they differed with the specific figures. The main concern, Ambassador Wood added, was that the growth of the drug trade threatened all objectives in Afghanistan. Afghanistan and the international community urgently needed short-term solutions that worked.

19. (C) Turner suggested more attention on arresting and incarcerating major drug traffickers. Ambassador Wood

reiterated that, despite efforts at promoting arrests, preventing planting, and targeting the drug trade, opium cultivation had tripled during the past six years. The main question was whether those with the strength to fight drug cultivation were actually prepared to do so. Most possessing this strength seemingly did not have their homes in Afghanistan. No one in the country had effectively opposed drug cultivation. Ambassador Wood said he did not advocate eradication over other measures, but that this activity needed to be part of the counter-drug response, along with alternative livelihoods, interdiction, and good governance. He noted that U.S. support to drug interdiction would be increased this year. In response to a query on Afghan willingness to allow ground-based spray eradication, Ambassador Wood said President Karzai had agreed to it in past years. The Vice President spoke out recently and strongly in favor, and, reportedly, two Governors had approached the Embassy to request aerial spray eradication. To date, however, the international community had not yet reached consensus on this issue. Ambassador Wood reiterated, &what we have been doing has not worked.8

10. (U) This message has been cleared by Ambassador Wood.

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